

When a Christian Suffers Persecution - Part 2 - Acts 24:2-10 – January 17th, 2010

- This is part two of a series entitled; "When a Christian Suffers Persecution." Paul is being persecuted and on trial for being a Christian.
- If you really think about it, there are some eerie parallels between what Paul goes through then and what we may go through now.

- Here in Acts 24, the Apostle Paul will rise from the pages of scripture as an example to us in how we can respond to persecution.
- In addition to this, we can also learn many lessons as it relates to those times of hardship and difficulty in the midst of various trials.

1. Be courageous (Verse 1)

- Paul isn't shaken in the face of a very powerful prosecuting attorney, the high priest Ananias, and the elders as witnesses against him.
- The reason for this is because he had a promise from the Lord back in Acts 23:11 that he will testify in Rome and not die in Caesarea.
- Paul isn't being courageous because of how bold he is, he is being courageous because of how good God is. He has God's Word!

2. Be genuine (Verses 2-4)

2 When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. 3 Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. 4 But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

- v2 Paul is called in as Tertullus presents his case before Felix. He commends him for his peaceful rule, foresight, and bringing reform.
- v3 He continues his flattery by addressing him as "most excellent Felix," and by expressing profound gratitude to him for everything.
- v4 He then requests that Felix be kind enough to hear him briefly, as he does not want to weary the governor any more than necessary.
- To say that this is disingenuous would be a gross understatement. This is flattery in its ugliest and most disgusting form.
- What makes it so insincere is that Felix was known as a master of cruelty and lust who was both brutal and treacherous.

"He flattered the detestable Felix, of who it was hard to say a single good word. To gain their ends men stoop to anything." (Spurgeon)

3. Be truthful (Verses 5-9)

5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect 6 and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him." 9 The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

- v5 Tertullus tells Felix that Paul is a troublemaker and a ringleader of the Nazarene sect who has stirred up riots among the Jews.
- v6 He goes on to accuse Paul of trying to desecrate the temple, by allowing a Gentile into the Holy Place, which is why they seized him.
- v7-8 In the NKJV he says that they wanted to judge Paul, but Lysias took him away by great force commanding us to bring him here.
- v9 Tertullus sort of ends his opening arguments by saying that the Jews have joined in stating all the accusations about Paul were true.
- The problem here is that absolutely nothing is true, and in fact, every charge against Paul is a blatant lie and false accusation.
- Everything that they accuse Paul of is fabricated and based purely on the rumors that were started by those who wanted to kill Paul.
- The fact of the matter is, there is absolutely no evidence to support that any of these charges that are brought against Paul are truthful.

- I am keenly aware, at least for myself, of my tendency to feel for Paul as the victim instead of relating to Tertullus as the perpetrator.
- The problem is that we always try to shed ourselves in a favorable light when we are placed in front of the mirror of God's Word.
- When in a predicament of great enormity and intensity as seen here, we like Tertullus tend to bend the truth with the hope of prevailing.

4. Be respectful (Verse 10)

10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense.

- v10 Paul is motioned to speak so he tells Felix that he knows he's been judge for many years and that he's glad to present his defense.
- Notice there is no flattery or insincerity in what Paul says. There is however, respect in what he says. Not for the man, but for the office.
- I believe that this is the missing jewel in and with the church today. Perhaps I can say it this way; "we can be very disrespectful."

Romans 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. NIV

Ephesians 6:5-8 5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. NIV

Proverbs 30:17 "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures. NIV

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, NIV